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VOLCANIC OUTBREAKS.

Causes of Disturbance is Discussed
by High Authority.

Discussing the causes of volcanic outbreaks in general, Professor Charles R. Dryer, in one of the latest textbooks covering this subject ("Physical Geography," 1901), says that "the most impressive and terrifying displays connected with volcanic eruptions are plainly due to the explosion of steam within the crater; but this does not account for the origin or existence of the liquid rock, nor for eruptions which are not explosive, like those of Hawaii and the lava flows of the Columbia plateau and the Dekkan. It is necessary, also, to account for the steam itself.

"The fact that volcanic eruptions occur in regions where elevation and folding have recently taken place or are still going on, indicates that both upheaval and volcanism may be due to the same general cause. If the rock, at a depth of twenty or thirty miles below the surface of the earth-crust, is hot enough to melt, but is kept solid only by pressure, it seems probable that a comparatively slight relief from pressure would be followed by immediate liquefaction. The up-folding of the strata above, or the occurrence of a fissure extending downward from the surface, would give the rock below more room; the pressure at that point would diminish, and, driven by the greater pressure all around, the now melted rock would rise. The water which the rock originally contained, or which it might meet on its way upward, would expand into steam, and still further assist the rise of the lava column, as the steam formed in a kettle of boiling mush or molasses causes it to rise and overflow. If the lava is thick and viscid, the steam escapes with explosive violence; if it is thin and liquid, the steam passes off more quietly."

The volcanic eruptions in the Windward islands have been explained upon the general theory set forth above—a theory which is explained at greater length by Professor Shaler in the International Magazine (January, 1900), a part of the article being given in the Public Opinion for January 4, 1900. Referring to the fact that the average increase in heat is at the rate of one degree for each fifty feet of descent, it is seen that a blanket of one hundred thousand feet of rocks would, in time, bring about a heat of two thousand degrees in the lowermost beds of the section. "Acting on the water contained in these rocks," Professor Shaler says, "the effect would be to give this a tendency to pass with explosive violence into the state of vapor. The straining to the state of expansion would be comparable to that of fired gunpowder. So long as this heated water was held in by a compact covering of overlying beds, this interstitial fluid would be likely to remain in the state of repose; but if, in any way, a path were opened for its escape to the surface, it would rush forth, and, in its going, would force along with it the rock in which it was enclosed.

At the temperature of even 2,000 degrees, these rocks, though essentially solid, owing to the pressure of materials above them, would become at once softened when the pressure was partly removed, so that they would be driven on by the expanding vapors contained in their centers. As soon as they began to move, they would become essentially liquid—in fact, lava. Coming quickly to the surface, without the chance for the vapor to part from the molten mass, the whole of the discharged matter would, by the expansion of the water in its interspaces, be blown to bits, as we see it in the beginning of an ordinary eruption. Later on, when the most of the tension is relieved, the lava melts up slowly so that the vapor has a chance to escape from the mass, permitting it to flow away as a stream. Finally, the discharge of vapor is lessened to a point when it can no longer force the molten rock to the surface, and the particular eruption is over, perhaps to recommence when other masses of steam

have found their way to the channel of escape."

Although Professor Shaler here considers only the rocks commonly known as "stratified" to be the source of volcanic tensions, there is reason to believe that this increase of heat, due to their deposition, takes effect more generally in the old crystalline productions of the earth than in overlying stratified beds which induce the rise in temperature. "It is well known," he says, "that probably all the crystalline rocks contain some water, either in small cavities or in the state of intimate and irresistible combination. On these rocks, the effect of the imposition of stratified deposits would be to induce explosions in the manner above described. It is, indeed, altogether probable that the greater number of eruptions arise from the expansion of vapors in this part of the crust, where, if the rocks have ever been stratified, they have lost all trace of the water-laid forms. Although in this, as in most geological actions, there is some doubt as to the applicability of the particular theory to all facts which come in the given class, it seems tolerably certain that it is generally true; no other view begins to account for so large a part of the phenomena exhibited in volcanic action."

SMITH GOES TO PRISON.

Supreme Court Holds Editor of Advertiser Guilty of Contempt.

The Supreme Court Monday June 4, handed down a decision affirming the judgement of the circuit court en banc in the Walter G. Smith contempt case, and Smith was remanded to the custody of the High Sheriff.

There are three written opinions in the case.

Smith was found guilty of contempt of court by Judges Humphreys, Gear and Robinson in publishing the so called McSwillegan cartoon, while the case to which it had reference was still pending.

He was sentenced to thirty days' imprisonment.

The syllabus of the decision is as follows:

"On habeas corpus to test the validity of a judgement for contempt the court may consider questions of jurisdiction only and not questions of mere irregularity or error.

"All reasonable intendments are made in favor of the jurisdiction of superior courts of record when their judgements are attacked collaterally.

"Whether an answer under oath by one cited for contempt operates as a purger or not depends on the circumstances.

"Whether all three judges of the First Circuit Court may act together as a court or not is immaterial if, when they do sit together, the presiding judge for the term substantially conducts the proceeding and finally pronounces judgement as if he alone constituted the court, the others being deemed to act in an advisory capacity only."

The opinion remanding Smith to the custody of the High Sheriff, was written by Chief Justice Frear. Justice Galbraith wrote a concurrent opinion while Justice Perry dissented.

Associate Justice Perry closes his dissenting opinion with the following conclusion:

"In my opinion the sentence and commitment if for a constructive contempt are illegal and invalid for lack of jurisdiction on the part of the court to impose such sentence or order such commitment, no judgement of guilty of such offense having been rendered. The Petitioner should be discharged."

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